

Dreams of Maria

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Summary: He had lost his sister, and now dreams of her. Stuck in a backwater planet, what could possibly help him through it? My entry into the RvBRC Life and Loss challenge.

Dreams of Maria

A/N: So this is my official entry into the RvBRC Life and Loss challenge. Originally, I intended to do something about Church losing Tex, or delve into Grif and Sister's emotional trauma that may or may not exist. But no, instead, I chose Donut! Why? Cause he's too damn cheerful, that's why! But still, I feel like he's a prime candidate for this sort of thing. We know next to nothing about his past...well, we hardly know anything about the Blood Gulch Gang's past, except of course for Church, Tex, and to an extent Sarge being in the Helljumper's. So, yes, Donut is my target this time. Oh, I don't own RvB, Halo, or anything else except the idea, yada yada...ON WITH THE SHOW!

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><p>"Death is not the greatest loss in life. The greatest loss is what dies inside us while we live."-Norman Cousins<p>

* * *

><p>The blazing sun of Epsilon-Indi was high in the sky by this point of the day, shining with all it's might upon the small planet rotating around it. Though try as it might, it's rays couldn't penetrate the atmosphere of the planet. The plumes of smoke and the burning skies had seen to it that no light other than that of the fires and still red hot craters would provide illumination for the battle scorn planet. First Contact had been a disaster. A single massive ship had dropped out of orbit around the planet. It took only a few hours for the carnage to begin. Dropships landed all over the habituated areas of Harvest, leaving many of the inhabitants to abandon their homes with only minutes of notice. Those lucky enough

to escape the murderous alien onslaught made their way to the capital city of Utgard, where the space elevator was set to ferry civilians up into propulsion pods that were to help them enter slip-space and escape.

Nearly the whole planet had headed the evacuation order, except for a few stubborn farmers who would have their fate shortly sealed with the looming carrier overhead. The civilians, to their credit, were doing an excellent job of staying calm and collected...or at least, as much as you could be after seeing friends and family ripped to shreds by the alien hordes. Among the some 300,000 people waiting for evacuation, were two teenagers. One was a rather well tanned young man with short blond hair, grasping with a vice like grip onto a smaller, more petite girls hand. She seemed to be related to the young man, as she too had blond hair put into a pony tail. Her face was wet with the tears of anguish. The two siblings had both lost their parents when the small, gorilla like aliens swarmed the train-station they were at. The parents of these children were able to save their offspring at the cost of their own lives. The young woman just recently stopped sobbing, though her emotional state was far from okay.

"Do you think their okay?" The sister asked quietly.

Her brother took a second to respond, picking his words carefully, "I think wherever they are, they're at peace. That's all that matters." He leaned down to her slightly and gave her a kiss on her head, trying to calm her down as best he could.

They had made their way to the front of the line, thought their was a problem. The container they were taking could only fit one more person. This, needless to say, was very agitating for the siblings.

"I don't want to leave my brother!" The young woman nearly screamed to the Militia Officer.

"Ma'am, please, don't worry! I swear that your brother will be on the next pod! You won't be separated for long." The officer tried to reason.

The girl's brother turned to her, "Maria, I promise I'll be right behind you. Please for Mom and Dad, get on this one."

After a shaky breath, she consented. She turned to give her brother one last hug before the two week long excursion in slip-space. With even more tears in her eyes, she said her goodbyes to her brother and left, stepping into the massive container. As it closed, it began to ascend the massive elevator to the orbiting space-station. The young man simply watched as his sister ascended into the clouds that were now black as night from all the smoke of the desecrated world. As the next container moved into position, the unthinkable happened.

In almost slow motion, it all happened. One second, the elevator's seventh shuttle was ascending at speeds of hundreds of feet per second. The next...it snapped. The tether connecting it to the orbiting Tiara snapped, sending the cable down to the surface. The pods that were on it could be seen going into free-fall. They dropped like bricks off the Empire State Building, hurtling towards the horrendous fate at surface level.

With all this happening, the young man was so stupefied with every thing that was happening, he could only do one thing...scream.

"MARIA!"

* * *

><p>Donut shot up, nearly hyperventilating from the dream induced stress he had just experienced. As he slowed his breathing back down to a normal speed, he could hear some rustling from the other side of the room. Grif was still asleep, seeing as how he could sleep through an atom bomb going off. Simmons, being part cyborg could easily switch off like you would switch off a light switch. That meant it was Sarge he almost woke up. Donut didn't need this right now, so as quietly as he could manage, he slipped down from the bunk he shared with Grif and made his way to the mess hall. Maybe some cocoa would help ease his shaken nerves.<p>

He stirred at the cocoa absentmindedly. He did this a lot since that fateful day his sister became part of the first casualties of the most destructive war in human history. When he dreams of her, falling through the air in the container, he always goes numb. He had long since exhausted all his tears. Hell, half the time he simply denied that it was real. He would go into a different mindset and simply thought it was a product of his overactive imagination. However, the other half of his time was spent quietly wallowing in his morbid reality. Sure he tried to cover it up with all the smiles and cheer, always irritating his teammates and friends with his constant conversations he was sure they would rather not be having. It wasn't their fault when they snapped though. Donut realized that his defense mechanism was grating to people and very rarely did they ever put up with him.

He heaved a long, drawn out sigh. He didn't know what to do anymore. This had happened at three other bases and he had no intention of being shipped out to anywhere else. Quiet, boring, predictable Blood Gulch was fine for him. He then heard the heavy sound of armored feet.

"Shit." He quietly swore under his breath.

"Donut, what the hell are you doing? You should be in bed in case the Blues attack this morning!" Sarge bellowed at the still sullen private.

"Yes sir, right away sir." He said in such a dejected way. He stood up and began to walk away when a gloved hand stopped him.

"Is there a problem, Donut?" Sarge asked, with something akin to annoyance at the lack of enthusiasm in Donut's voice.

"No, no problem sir," he lied. "Just wanted to get a mug of cocoa as a midnight snack. I'll head back to my bunk, sir."

He began once more to shuffle out of the mess when something so incredibly strange happened.

"Who was it?" Sarge asked.

"Sorry, sir?" He replied, wondering what he meant.

"Who did you lose, Franklin?"

That in itself nearly caused the private to fall flat on his ass. Never before had anyone in any of his units ever called him by his first name, and never before had any squad leaders shown any interest in his problems. It stunned and shocked him to hear Sarge, Sarge of all his Cos, to be concerned about him.

"I uh, didn't lose anyone, sir. I'm an only--"

"Don't give me that bullshit, son." He interrupted. "I fought in the war, I know the look of a man who lost someone."

Quiet reigned supreme for a few minutes until at last Donut spoke.

"My sister...I lost my sister at first contact." He said mournfully.

Sarge motioned for him to sit down. He pushed the mug over to Donut and proceeded to take off his helmet. The hiss of the pressure seals disengaging were the only sounds in the mess hall for a few seconds. Donut knew this was a special time. Sarge hardly ever took off his helmet, let alone in front of any of his subordinates. He placed the piece of armor on the steel bench, and heaved a long sigh himself. With his face marred with the scars sustained from his time in the ODS Helljumpers, he looked to be quite the opposing figure. The few other times the others had seen him helmet-less, he wore a mask of either irritation or was very passive. This time he seemed to have a look of...weariness plastered on his battle ridden face. He reached down to one of his compartments and took out a small, silver flask. He took a generous swig from it and simply stared straight ahead. Finally, after what seemed like hours he spoke.

"Franklin, I lost my wife when the covie bastards attacked Arcadia. After that attack, I swore on her grave that I wouldn't rest for a single moment until every last one of those methane sucking, dinosaur loving, split faced sons o' bitches were killed. It took me thirty years of fighting, killing, and pain to learn what it means to be empty inside. Never once did I ever stop and think of what I was becoming, or what my sweet Caroline would think of me," He stopped to take another swig from the flask. "Finally, by the end of the war, I didn't know how to do anything but fight. There was no life for me outside the Corps. I was nothing more than a bitter, ugly bastard who wanted nothing more than to fight anyone and everyone. That's what landed me here. The Corps just wanted the trouble maker gone and forgotten on some backwater piece of shit planet!"

With that he slammed the flask down so hard, the table shook, spilling some of the cocoa in Donut's mug onto the shiny, reflective surface. Donut held his breath and waited for him to calm down. Donut knew not to interrupt Sarge when he was pissed, let alone when he was trying to have a moment with him. Sarge drew in a deep breath full of air, released it and carried on with his story.

"My point is, don't be like me Franklin. I'm just a shell of my former self and I try to fill that void with fighting. You're lucky,

though. You might think that what you went through is horrible, and while it is, it made you stronger for it. You're the type of person who can carry on no matter the circumstances. It's god's gift to you, don't let it go to waste, son," He returned the flask to it's compartment, and placed his helmet back on his head, letting to seals pressurize. "Don't stay up too late, Donut, we got combat practice in the morning!"

And he was gone, returning to his bunk presumably. Donut just sat there, letting the words sink in for a few minutes. Slowly, and without realizing it, he began to smile. Not only had he and Sarge just had a moment, but he was also bursting with confidence. Confidence that he would make it through every thing. Did he still miss his sister, yes. Did he still mourn her, no. That part of his life was over. All the shit that had happened to him, he knew he would get through it. It all started with him. He grabbed the cocoa with renewed vigor and vigorously chugged the chocolate confection. He tossed the cup in the sink and headed back to his bunk. As he entered, he heard the loud, obnoxious snoring of Grif. He heard the slight hiss of Simmon's cybernetic hydraulics, and heard the sounds of Sarge yelling at some of his dream aliens. Donut smiled, knowing in his heart that even though they could get at each other's nerves sometimes, that this was his family. And with determination and perseverance, he would get through anything. As he lowered himself into his bunk, he had one final thought pass through his mind before the sandman took him away.

Everything is gonna be alright.

End
file.